

The Brooklyn Jewish Center Review



JEWISH RELIGION

The Philosophers

“THE PHILOSOPHERS”

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Rosh Hashanah, 5745

September 1984

NEWS OF THE CENTER

SEASON'S FIRST BULLETIN

Because of the lateness of the High Holy Days, we decided to publish a Bulletin in September, the first of the season. In past years, we omitted the Bulletins until the Review was published and distributed. This year, with Rosh Hashanah coming on Thursday and Friday, September 27 and 28, the need for one was extremely important. The next Bulletin will be published in November.

MISHNA CLASS TO BEGIN ITS 28th YEAR

Our Mishna Class will celebrate the end of its 27th year and the start of the 28th on Sunday, October 21. Services will be held at 8:30 am and will be followed by breakfast at 9:15 am, sponsored by Belle and Isaac Franco. Rabbi Bloch will then conduct the lesson that morning. Registration will take place as well.

Classes will continue the Sundays following. The breakfast on October 28 is sponsored by Lou and Moe Mark. The breakfast on November 4 will be sponsored by Mrs. Kaye Gold, in loving memory of her husband, David, who was our Executive Director for many years.

The rolls are now open for those who want to sponsor future breakfasts. We will try to honor dates opted by past sponsors for special events in their lives. These, however, must be confirmed without delay to enable the Fellowship to accommodate others who desire those dates.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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*The views expressed
by the writers in these pages
are not necessarily those of the Review.*

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

There is an old beloved verse, "There is a tavern in the Town," by an anonymous author. Let me quote a small portion thereof:

"Fare thee well, for I must
leave thee,
And remember that the best of
friends, must part,
Adieu kind friends, adieu, adieu,
I can no longer stay with you.
I'll bring my harp on a weeping
willow tree,
And may the world go well with
thee."

This may sound sinister, but please do not take it so. It is just that Anne and I are relocating. It was a great pleasure and privilege to have known you for a period of almost a half century - a member, President of Men's Club, Trustee and Officer, and as Executive Secretary. The quality of life was much enhanced for us during these years. We were inspired by the many dedicated and devoted people who gave so liberally of their time, efforts and love to the Brooklyn Jewish Center and to its revered and beloved illustrious Rabbi, Israel H. Levinthal, of blessed memory.

Although we will now be separated by hundreds of miles, this institution and its membership will always be remembered most fondly in our minds and hearts.

Anne joins me in wishing all of you the best of everything in the years ahead. In closing, I would like to extend our thanks to all of you who were so gracious to us at all times.

Stanley C. Bresnick

ABOUT THE COVER...

"The Philosophers" is the creation of Seymour Rosenthal of Flushing, New York, and was drawn in the 1960's. It is part of the Picture Collection of the New York Public Library.

PATIENCE

The task of putting together an issue of the Review may seem to be easy for those who are outside and not even looking in. Years ago, when our Editorial Board was larger and we published the Review at least once a month, the members of the Board would meet for an afternoon at the Center and discuss the issues to come forth. Today, our Board has dwindled and we don't meet any longer. And, we only publish one issue for the High Holy Days.

It may be simple to put out one issue a year, but we start in May to get our writers to submit manuscripts. Some are extremely conscientious and get the material to you in no time flat. Others need more time and run beyond the deadline.

When we get to this editorial we have practically put the Review to bed. Then there is the printer who tries to comply, but the magazine has to go out to our members and friends and that means the United States Post Office. We are still waiting for mail that is long overdue. Who's to blame? You tell us. We don't understand the delay when we're used to delivery of mail overnight. Today, that is a rarity.

Yet, many complain when they don't get a copy of the issue. I want everyone to be satisfied, but it means stretching myself to extraordinary limits. I have to set aside my business matters in order to get the Review to press. No one gets paid for doing this work.

Why do I write this? I'm letting down my sparse locks and ask your indulgence and will ask you whether you can help us by joining in this effort. The Center Review must live on.

Louis Kramer

THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF

by Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal

Most of the Jewish holidays commemorate specific events in our history. Thus, Passover, on the fifteenth of *Nissan*, marks the date when the Israelites were freed from their bondage in Egypt. Shavuot, or Pentecost, observed on the sixth day of *Sivan*, commemorates, according to Jewish traditions, the giving of the Torah on the mountain of Sinai. Hanukkah and Purim are observed on the anniversaries of the events they commemorate. Even Rosh Hashanah, our New Year, is associated with certain historic events. It marks the creation of the world. The Rabbis enumerate other historic events occurring on the first day of *Tishre*, which Rosh Hashanah also commemorates. What historic event does Yom Kippur, our Day of Atonement, commemorate? True, it is the day of penitence and forgiveness of sins; but why is it observed on this specific date, the tenth day of *Tishre*?

The Rabbis do give an answer, and their answer is most significant. They link this particular day with the incident of the *maase ha-egel*, the making of the golden calf. You recall the incident. Just a short time after the Israelites, standing at the foot of Sinai, had loudly proclaimed: "We will do and we will hearken," and while Moses was still on the mountain top about to deliver the tablets of God's Law, the Israelites suddenly forgot their own words and made for themselves a golden calf, before which they danced and cried: "These are thy gods, O Israel!" And you remember what followed. Moses came down from the mountain with the tablets in his hands, and when he saw what his people were doing, his countenance drooped in disappointment, and, in anger,

he cast the tablets to the ground, shattering them. The Rabbis, adding a fine touch to the Biblical account, tell us that when God saw what Moses had done, He congratulated him and said: "*y'yasher kochaka sheshavarta*," "Thou hast done well that thou hast broken them!" The tablets would be useless to a people worshipping a golden calf.

The Bible continues the tale, describing how God wanted to destroy the people for their unfaithfulness, how Moses, the great lover of his people despite their faults, pleaded in their behalf, and how, finally, God yielded to his fervent plea saying: "I have forgiven, according to your words," and gave him the second tablets of the Law. "It was on the tenth day of *Tishre*" the Rabbis tell us, "when God acquiesced to the plea of Moses, and forgave the people for their sin of worshipping the golden calf; and it was then that God ordained that that date be designated as a day of atonement for all future generations."

Of all the backslidings of which the Israelites were guilty while in the wilderness, this sin was regarded by the Rabbis as one of the gravest, a sin to be remembered and recalled at all future times, the worshipping of the idol of gold. It was the sin that caused the breaking of the *luchot*, the divine tablets of the moral law.

Let us go more deeply into the nature of this sin, which we are to recall on this Day of Atonement. What was the nature of its seriousness? The Rabbis, in their attempt to fathom its deeper meaning, give us a curious explanation. They picture Moses as pleading with God: "Master of

This sermon was preached by Rabbi Levinthal on Yom Kippur, October 5, 1957. It is published in the Rabbi's book, "Judaism Speaks To The Modern World" in 1963 by Abelard-Schuman.

This article was selected to commemorate the second *Yahrzeit* of Rabbi Levinthal.

the world, it was the gold and silver which Thou hast bestowed upon them in abundance, *ad she'amru dai*, so that they said: 'It is enough,' that was what caused them to make a god of gold."

This statement is usually misunderstood by the average reader who thinks that it refers to the Israelites as saying to God, when He granted them the gold and silver of the Egyptians, "It is enough, give us no more!" That is contrary to what we usually observe in human nature. It is rare that you will find a man laden with gold saying, "I have enough. I want no more!" What Moses really meant was that the Israelites had been so blinded by the gold they now possessed, that they said, "*dai, this is enough in life; nothing else is worthwhile; gold alone is the all-sufficiency in life.*" When people adopt such a life philosophy, it naturally follows that they make a god of their gold, a god who demands complete obeisance, whom they worship above all else, before whom they dance and proclaim: "This is our god!" When this happens, morality is destroyed, ideals lose their potency, culture is of no value, civilization is no more.

The Rabbis, commenting upon the name of a site in the wilderness which the Bible calls *di zahav*, tell us that it was this very site on which the idol of gold had been fashioned and that it was to bear this name, *di zahav*, "gold alone is enough," for all time to come, to serve as a lasting reminder of that great sin.

If I were to characterize the world in which we live today, I would say it worshiped *di zahav*, "the all-sufficiency of gold!" Not in God, but in gold we put our trust! If you want to understand the true meaning of all the man-made tragedies that afflict our world, it is this *di zahav*, which has turned our world into a vale of tears and sorrows. One of the Rabbis, analyzing many of the tragedies that have afflicted the world, comes to the conclusion: "There is no punishment, no tragedy that has come to the world that has not within it some measure of the original idol of gold."

It is not that gold in itself is bad or evil. Our sages, in a striking comment, tell us that originally God did not want to create

gold, foreseeing the evils and the tragedies that it might bring about. But He also saw that gold could be used for the erection of a holy sanctuary, for good causes, and so He bethought Himself and created it. There is gold that can serve to bless and to enhance the life of man just as there is gold that can be a curse to man. As R. Chisda says: "There are two kinds of gold — *zahav sham v'zahav tov*, — there is gold that is ordinary and there is gold that is good." Gold is evil when it is worshiped, when it becomes our god.

That is at the heart of the world's tragedy. I do not wish to go into a detailed analysis of the political and diplomatic difficulties that face mankind today, the wars and the threats of wars that we behold. The root of most of these evils is the worship of the idol of gold, which makes naught of truth, of justice, of righteousness. This sin affects the whole world. You see it in our system of education. A generation or two ago the student was encouraged to study the classics, Latin and Greek, the thinking of ancient philosophers. Today all this is dismissed. Such study has no practical value, it cannot help in attaining material success. Only studies that lead to the acquisition of gold are encouraged today. You see it in our economic life, the business man who sacrifices everything, his very health, in the worship of this idol, and whose reward is often ulcers, shattered nerves, even a broken life. Our mental hospitals are filled to overflowing and cannot keep pace with the steady increase of nervous breakdowns, mental deterioration, the result, in many cases, of this intense worship of gold. The corruption revealed among some of the leaders in labor unions and in business management, the violation of ethical and legal standards by some of the heads of great corporations, and even the tremendous increase of juvenile delinquency which now plagues our country, much of this can be traced, directly and indirectly, to the great sin, the worship of the idol of gold.

Recently, a feature article appeared in *The New York Times*, in which the author quotes one of Balzac's characters, the Village Rector, who on his return from a visit to America, described it as "that land of money and selfishness, where souls are cold." And the author also

quotes Europeans who refer to America as "the kingdom of the dollar god." True, it ill befits the pot to call the kettle black. These descriptions are as true of European countries and of other peoples today as they are of America. It is the *makat ha-olam*, "the plague which infests the entire world." But that does not excuse us from acknowledging the sin that has overtaken many of the people in our own land. Virtually everyone, and everything, is judged today by the dollar standard, and *di zahav* — the all-sufficiency of gold — has become the accepted motto of most of the people in our land. We are a prosperous people and can thank God for it. Our prosperity could be the means of bringing sunshine into many a darkened life. But, as God says in the words of the prophet: "And the silver and gold which I multiplied for her they made into a *baal*, an idiot!"

Alas, this sin is affecting our Jewish life as well. We did have, in the past, a measure of values. For instances, the *talmid chakam*, the student, the man of learning and culture, the idealist, was the aristocrat looked up to by all others in the community. The individual who served his fellow man, who spent his life in *gemilut chasadim*, in the performance of loving kindness, was regarded as the ideal to be emulated by all others. Today, material success has become the idol to which many of us dedicate our lives. In olden times, the infant in the cradle heard the lullaby: *Torah is die beste schoireh*, "Torah, learning, is the best commodity," and the child was inspired to devote his life in its pursuit. Today, cleverness, shrewdness, the tricks of the trade, anything that can help to attain material success, are instilled in the heart of the child. No wonder that young couples today want to start out with the flush of material prosperity which their parents may have achieved only after a lifetime of struggle and hardship. I have seen families which for many years had lived in peace, suddenly turned into warring camps, relatives bitterly hating each other, all because of dissatisfaction and disagreement about the division of money bequeathed by a parent. Again, the worship of the idol of gold! Yea, we Jews, too, have become ensnared by the materialistic philosophy of the age. No wonder that God wanted us in every age

to recall the incident of the golden calf, to seek forgiveness for this sin of which we, too, are guilty.

It is interesting to see how the ancient Rabbis, in enacting the regulations with regard to the Day of Atonement, pursue this very thought which I have endeavored to propound to you. On this most solemn of all days in the year, the High Priest was to enter the Holy of Holies to plead for atonement on behalf of his people. He was to adorn himself in the finest and purest of robes on that occasion, *but the robes were not to bear any trimming of gold*. And the sages ask: "Why could not the High Priest adorn himself with garments of gold?" Their answer is most significant. "The prosecutor cannot become the defender. We dare not give Satan the opportunity to say to God: yesterday they made of gold an idol, and today they come before Thee with the very gold to plead forgiveness!" On this holiest of all days we are to cleanse our eyes and purify our minds from the very sight and thought of this gold which we have so unfortunately learned to worship.

The Rabbis also carry this thought through in their interpretation of the laws pertaining to the *shofar*, the horn whose sounds are heard on Rosh Hashanah and at the conclusion of Yom Kippur: "It is not permitted to use a *shofar* that is trimmed with gold at the part which is touched by the human lips, nor a *shofar* that is adorned with gold on the inside. If the sound that it is to produce is affected in the slightest degree by any gold upon it, it is forbidden to make use of it." How clearly and how emphatically they keep emphasizing the danger of making gold an object of man's worship.

And now we should understand why it is this tenth day of *Tishre* that has been decreed by God as the day on which we should atone for this great sin, on which we should recognize the inherent dangers of a life based on *di zahav*, on the all sufficiency of gold. The great philosopher Santayana, in his autobiographical work, pays tribute to a teacher who taught him "to possess and not to be possessed!" It is this truth which Yom Kippur emphasizes, to possess gold, but not to be possessed by it. May we learn this truth, and God

will say to us, as he said to Moses: "I have forgiven according to thy words." We shall then be able to accept anew the

tablets of God's Law, which alone can make life meaningful and worthwhile.

FROM OUR ANCIENT FOLKLORE

by Rabbi Abraham P. Bloch

Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Akiva sailed to Antioch, Syria, to raise funds for poor scholars. Among the prominent Jews of Antioch was a famous philanthropist named Abba Yehuda whose wealth was matched by his generosity. Shortly after the arrival of the sages a fire swept Abba Yehuda's granaries and left him penniless.

The rabbis were greeted upon their arrival by a large crowd of Jews. Abba Yehuda was not among them. He was ashamed to show up empty-handed. He stayed home and brooded silently.

"You look miserable," Abba Yehuda's wife uttered plaintively. "Is there anything besides our loss that troubles you?"

"Yes," Abba Yehuda admitted. "The sages have come to our city to raise funds for charity and to my mortification I am unable to make my usual contribution." The good woman nodded in sympathy. She understood her husband's sorrow and distress.

"Don't despair," she said. "Where there is a will there is a way. We still have our small farm. Sell half of it and give the proceeds to charity."

Abba Yehuda was relieved. His wife's encouragement dispelled his gloom and restored his self-respect. He sold half of his farm and brought the cash to the rabbis. They had learned of his recent impoverishment but nevertheless accepted his contribution and blessed him: "May the Almighty make good your loss." Abba Yehuda thanked them for their good wishes and returned contented to his home.

The farm was rocky and arid. It was impossible to plow the soil with manual power. Reluctantly, he hitched his only

cow to the plow and urged the animal to pull it with all its might. The plow hit a rock and broke in half. Abba Yehuda raised his eyes to heaven and said: "It must be that my faith is being tested. I fear not poverty and privation. I fear only that I may weaken and lose my faith. Please give me strength to accept my fate without misgiving or regret." Heartened by his silent prayer, he unhitched the cow and led it to the barn. On the way the cow stumbled, fell and broke a leg. "I sinned," Abba Yehuda said to himself. "A cow is not a beast of burden. I should never have hitched it to a plow. I deserved the loss of my plow, but why did the cow, which served me loyally, have to suffer so grievously?" He rushed over to the cow and extracted its leg from the hole where it had been trapped. A dim glimmer of light flashed from the bottom of the hole. Curious, he fetched the object. It was a large diamond probably buried for safekeeping by some unknown ancestor. Abba Yehuda caressed the cow and whispered: "You have always been a faithful creature, that is why you have been selected to lead me to this fortune. It saddens me that my fortune came as a result of your misfortune."

A year later the eminent rabbis paid another visit to the city of Antioch. Abba Yehuda was among the well-wishers who came to greet the guests. The rabbis recognized him and were cheered by his presence. "You look well," they said. "Has the Lord been kind to you?" "Indeed, He has blessed me, may His name be glorified for ever and ever. I own many farms and herds of cattle. My granaries bulge with cereals. My olives have yielded first quality oil. The blessing you gave me on your last visit was more than fulfilled."

"We are happy to hear that God has deemed you worthy of His favors," the rabbis remarked with obvious satisfac-

tion.

Abba Yehuda hesitated for a moment, as if for a loss of words. Finally, the proper answer came into focus. "At times I wonder what I have done to deserve all this bounty. There are people in this city who had given in the past much larger contributions than mine. Strangely, my name always heads the list of contributors as if I rank first." The rabbis smiled and said: "The amount of a contribution does not necessarily determine its value. It is the attitude of the giver which counts most. You not only give charity but you enjoy giving it. That is why we placed you first on our list and that is why the Almighty blessed you."

* * * * *

The revered Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev loved his fellowmen with deep compassion and devotion. He refused to accept the notion that any individual could be guilty of malice or deliberate wrongdoing. If one commits a crime he must have acted under duress or some other circumstance which extenuates the apparent misdeed.

An incident which called the rabbi's defensive instinct into play occurred when he walked in the dark of the night, just before the break of dawn, to attend Selichos services. His faithful shamash, who had served him loyally for many years, was at his side. The penetrating chill of the late September weather was whipped up by autumnal gales. The rabbi quickened his pace but soon was forced by a sudden cloudburst and torrential rain to seek some shelter. Spying a ramshackle house, the shamash pulled Rabbi Levi Yitzchok under a canopy held by metal underpinnings which tilted dangerously to one side. The rabbi pressed against the wall to escape the relentless dripping which trickled through the cracked eaves of the aging roof. Deeply immersed in his thoughts, he soon floated off into heavenly spheres where angels fly and scurry to and fro to perform their appointed missions.

The shamash, a more earthy being than his master, was not given to heavenly flights of thoughts. He was absorbed by the ordinary mortal curiosity of his im-

mediate surroundings. Straining his eyes in the dark, he noticed that the windows of the lower and upper floors were boarded up. A few cracks in the wall exposed the sorry state of disrepair of the interior of the house. Down at the street level, a basement window, opaque with countless layers of dust and grime, was intact, untouched by vandals and the ravages of time. A dim light, barely perceptible, filtered through the smudge on the glass and spilled into the darkness of the street.

The shamash, drawn by curiosity, left Rabbi Levi Yitzchok for a moment and sauntered over to the window to see what he could see. He bent down and pressed his nose against the glass. What he saw made him straighten up with a start. About a dozen people sat around a table laden with liquor and sundry delicacies. He recognized some of the men who had an unsavory reputation. Among them were petty crooks, thieves and pickpockets. The Jewish community of Berdichev, famous for its scholars, was also plagued by an element of undesirable characters.

The shamash dashed over to the rabbi

and roused him from his reveries. "May the Almighty have pity on us," he exclaimed. "On this sacred night, on the eve of Selichos, some Jewish outcasts drink liquor and gorge themselves shamelessly." The rabbi, jolted out of his spiritual trance, caught the drift of the serious charge made by the shamash. "Heaven forbid," he said, "no Jew feasts on a night like this. They are probably partaking of a light repast so that they may have the privilege of reciting communally the benedictions of Grace." The shamash was not convinced. He took another look through the window. "See for yourself," he blurted out vehemently. "They are shaking hands all around, concluding a thieves' pact of distribution of their ill-gotten loot." "Ah," said the rabbi. "They are shaking hands to wish each other a 'l-chayim' and a 'Shanah To-vah.' "

The shamash threw up his hands in disbelief. "Look what is going on now. They are whispering to each other, planning the next day's plan of operation." "They are whispering to each other," the rabbi thought out loudly, "they are surely confessing to each other their sins and now hope for God's forgiveness and atonement."

THERE ARE FOUR NEW YEARS: TRACTATE ROSH HA-SHANAH

by Rabbi Mordecai H. Lewittes

"There are four New Years," is the opening statement of the Mishnaic tractate *Rosh Ha-Shanah*. The Mishnah, which was compiled by Rabbi Judah the Patriarch at the end of the second century of the Common Era, is a compendium of Jewish laws and a basic source for our understanding of Judaism. *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, one of the tractates of the Mishnah, contains the fundamental laws relating to the New Year festival.

Days To Remember

At first we may be baffled by the statement that there are four New Years since we associate *Rosh Ha-Shanah* with the widely observed holiday occurring at the beginning of the Fall season. In a sense, the paradox of more than one New Year parallels the variety of New Years in our

own day — a religious New Year, a secular New Year, individual fiscal New Years, etc.

The first of Nisan, celebrated in the Spring season close to the vernal equinox, ushers in the New Year for festivals. Passover, which falls in Nisan, is the first of the three pilgrimage holidays; the other two are Shavuot and Sukkot. Nisan is the first of the twelve months of the year. The reign of the kings of Israel was also reckoned from the first of Nisan. Thus, in the case of Solomon who was enthroned in Adar, the month immediately following (Nisan), marked the beginning of the second year of his reign.

The first of Elul was the New Year for the tithing of cattle. An animal born in Av, during the summer, became two

years old on the first of Elul and could not be given as a tithe for cattle born on or after the first of Elul. (This law was especially important in the third and sixth years of the Sabbatical cycle when there were special tithes set aside for the poor.)

Similarly, the 15th of Shevat was the designated Rosh Ha-Shanah for crops and fruits. Thus, olives, figs or dates became a year older on the 15th of Shevat — again, a significant date in connection with the law of tithing. Today, of course, Tu Bi-Shevat (15th of Shevat) is celebrated by Jews in Israel and throughout the world as Arbor Day. Who does not fondly remember and savor the *bokser*, figs, dates and nuts which give this day a special aroma and taste? And what better day for remembering the Jewish National Fund which has played so great a role in transforming the Land of Israel from a desert into a land rich with trees and foliage and forests?

The Rosh Ha-Shanah, par excellence, is the first of Tishri which we are commanded to celebrate as a festival of solemn rest with a holy convocation, and as a memorial day for the blowing of trumpets (Leviticus 23, 24). According to tradition, this was the anniversary of creation of the world and the day on which Israel and the world will be redeemed. It was the day for ushering in the Sabbatical year every seventh year and the Jubilee year every fiftieth year. It marked the beginning of a new calendar year (currently 5745) and a new chronological year in the reign of Gentile kings.

It was also the awesome Day of Judgment and of spiritual reckoning. "On Rosh Ha-Shanah," says the Mishnah, "all that come into the world pass before Him like sheep that are being counted." The Mishnah quotes the Psalmist who describes God as the supreme and universal judge of all humanity:

"He who fashions the hearts of them all
Who considers all their works."

(Psalms 33, 15)

It is this motif of passing in judgment before God, one by one, which serves as the basis of the stirring prayer *U-Netanneh Tokef*, and which gives this festival day a solemn character.

The Calendar

In ancient times, the beginning of each month was determined by the sighting of the new moon. Two trustworthy witnesses who had sighted the new moon would appear before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. They were examined carefully as to what they had seen so that no error was made.

If the court accepted their testimony, the Bet-Din would declare "Mekudash" ("the new moon has been sanctified"). The people responded, "Mekudash, Mekudash!" If witnesses did not appear on time, the old month was extended for a day. Based on this declaration, the community would know when to celebrate the ordained festivals that fell during each month.

When the new month was officially inaugurated, flares were lighted on the Mount of Olives. Watchers on Mount Sartaba, 27 miles away, would light a second bonfire as soon as they saw the beacon on the Mount of Olives. Flares were then relayed to mountain peaks in Transjordan, Syria and Mesopotamia. In Babylon, the people from near and far lit torches on the roofs of their houses; so great was the number of flares that "all of Babylon appeared to be a solid mass of flame."

Later, however, the Samaritans out of spite lit bonfires on the wrong day to mislead the Jews. The Sanhedrin, therefore, instituted a messenger relay system. When the Diaspora became too widespread for a relay system to be effective, Jews began to celebrate each Yom Tov for two days, since one of the two days was certain to be the correct day for celebration. This "Second Day of the Diaspora" is still widely observed everywhere, except in Israel. (The Reform Jews in the Diaspora celebrate one day; the second day of the pilgrimage festivals has become optional for Conservative congregations. Rosh Ha-Shanah is observed for two days in Israel, too, since uncertainty prevailed at the beginning of the month.)

The importance of reliable witnesses was evident, particularly since on one occasion a Sadducee purposely misled the Rabbis so that Shavuot would be

celebrated on a Sunday rather than exactly fifty days after the Passover.

We are told that Rabban Gamliel constructed a model of the moon in its various phases on the wall of his upper chamber. He would examine each witness carefully, with the aid of the model, about the relation of the crescent, the hollowed concave side of the moon, to the sun. A witness who testified that he had seen the crescent of the moon facing the sun was obviously in error since this is impossible.

Once Gamaliel and Joshua ben Hananya differed as to the reliability of two witnesses. Gamaliel declared a new month but Joshua wished to defer the new month by one day. Yom Kippur, too, would then be deferred by a day.

Gamaliel angrily proclaimed, "I order you to appear before me with staff and purse on the Day of Atonement as it falls according to thy reckoning."

Saddened by the necessity to violate what he regarded as the true Day of Atonement, Joshua did not know what to do. He was persuaded, however, by Akiva and the other Rabbis to accept the authority of the leader of the Sanhedrin. The only legitimate holidays, they argued, are determined not by the heavenly bodies, but by the proclamation of the court.

We are told by the Mishnah:

Joshua took his staff and his money in his hand and went to Yavneh to Rabban Gamaliel on the day which fell according to his reckoning on the Day of Atonement. Rabban Gamaliel stood up and kissed him on the head and said to him, "Come in peace, my master and my disciple! My master in wisdom and my disciple in that thou hast accepted my words."

Observance of the New Year

The final section of the tractate discusses the shofar and the Rosh Ha-Shanah service. It is noted that originally the shofar was blown on the Sabbath in Jerusalem but not outside of Jerusalem, since handling the shofar might lead to

Sabbath violations. After the destruction of the Second Temple, Johanan ben Zakai ordained that the shofar should be blown on the Sabbath in Yavneh or wherever the Sanhedrin convened.

The manner of blowing the Shofar is prescribed. There were three series of blasts — once after the Biblical verses proclaiming that God is sovereign (Malkhuyot), once after the verses recounting God's remembrance of His creatures (Zikhronot), and once after the verses that allude to the sounding of the shofar (Shofarot). The shofar had to be simple, preferably the horn of a wild goat; the horn of the cow reminding us that the golden calf was forbidden.

The Mishnah, written at a time when Jews were under the Roman yoke, hints that on occasion the sounding of the

shofar was prohibited by the authorities. They feared that the sound of the shofar was a call to rebellion. Undaunted, Jews gathered in pits and in caves and blew the ram's horn. Worshipers were urged at such times to direct their hearts to the sounding of the shofar and to be firm in their faith. They were reminded that when Moses raised his arms toward heaven, when battling the Amalekites, Israelites looked upward to God for salvation and did not lose courage.

The tractate *Rosh Ha-Shanah* consists of four brief chapters. It is not too technical, is readily available in translation, and can be studied by the lay man individually or in an adult class under guidance without undue difficulty. In this small tractate, one finds a description of some of the fundamental laws of a great religious festival.

MARRIAGE

by Nathan Krinsky, M.D.

A study of ancient Hebrew literature reveals the existence of a comparatively high development of social and domestic life in that ancient society.

From Genesis, Chapter 2:23-24, we learn that after God took the rib from Adam and made a woman from it, and brought her to Adam... the man said: "this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman (Heb. Ishshah), because she was taken out of Man (Heb. Ish). Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

Judaism is basically a family-centered religion; and all teaching throughout life was to make certain that that stable family was maintained. This was stressed and enforced by the Mitzvah, "Honor thy Father and thy Mother." Though Scripture sanctions polygamy, and the Patriarchs, with the exception of Isaac, were polygamous, monogamy - as reflected in the story of Adam and Eve, and as God's Covenant only with the Jewish people is sometimes interpreted - is envisioned as the ideal marital relationship between man and woman.

Building a family fulfills God's wish. It is considered that each Jew is one-half a person; when man and woman unite, there results one who is complete. The Talmud tells us that "A man without a wife is not a whole man" (Yevamot 63a). In Rabbinic teaching celibacy is considered unnatural. It is not he who marries who sins, for according to the Talmud (Kid. 29b) the sinner is the unmarried man who "spends all his days in sinful thoughts."

Marriage is not only for procreation and companionship; it also fulfills one as a person, for as the Talmud states: "He who has no wife is not a proper man. He lives without joy, blessing, goodness... and without peace" (Yev. 62b).

We are taught the concept that marriage is a covenant relationship entered into before God. The Prophet Malachi (2:14) is specific in his statement that "the Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth." Since the family was and is the foundation of Jewish social structure, it is natural that the institution of marriage should have received such particular attention in Jewish law, as we have learned from our

study of the Mishnah Order NASHIM, which deals principally with betrothal, marriage, divorce - and the relations of woman to man.

According to Judaism, marriage is not a ritual, but a contract; yet, as a contract it is of such supreme importance that it is given the title of sanctification - KID-DUSHIN - and is supported by the loftiest ideals and the most exact provisions and regulations (as those of us in the Mishna class can attest).

The Jewish marriage law shows an explicit tendency to elevate marriage from the plane of private contract law to that of morality - marriage is regarded as a social provision of mankind, its purpose being to discourage purely human desires and to contribute to the welfare and advancement of the family, the group, and the nation. Since marriage means the founding of a home, it was naturally observed with great festivity and joy. As one commentator said it, marriage is "the building of joy." And the Talmud calls the child "the staff upon which the mother can lean in her old age."

And speaking of children, brings us to the root of it all; for basic to Judaism's conviction that life is good, is the religious obligation to fulfill the first commandment addressed by God to man: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). Judaism, therefore, does not derogate the sex act per se; but teaches that the commandment is to be fulfilled not through animal-like promiscuity, but within the framework of a properly established, stable family.

It is in this type of a permanent, stable, loving family that children can be reared properly, and educated so that they will grow up to be that ideal, loving, moral and ethical individual that the world needs so badly.

In contrast to what the authors of our Sacred Writings had envisaged, we find in our time that the concept of marriage is changing. Marriage which was once considered a social convention of more or less permanence, lately has become less permanent, and not a social tradition. The institution of marriage is considered ar-

Sabbath and Holy Day Services

chaic, and the glib, humorous saying, "Who wants to live in an institution" has wide circulation.

We see the many forms of "living together"; or "shacking up"; or just "sharing an apartment"; the ceremony has become devoid of real meaning - if there is a ceremony at all. The religious ceremony has lost its importance, and often is conducted only under strong parental pressure, or as appeasement, and as a concession to lessen the trauma on the parents. There is widespread feeling, that if it doesn't work out, well, "We can get a divorce." Being divorced today is just as acceptable as being married.

Here let me say that though Judaism holds marriage sacred, still it recognizes that a divorce may be necessary when there arises an intolerable situation. Although Judaism permits divorce, it looks upon it with great misgivings, for, as the Talmud (Gotten 90b) states: "The very altar sheds tears for him who divorces his wife with whom he has grown up."

The children in these cases are left confused, feel unloved, become concerned about their future, and are really thrown off balance. The consequences can be dire indeed.

Even for the adult, there must be the feeling of shame, the sense of guilt; the loneliness becomes deadening, and the sadness can be devastating. To the Rabbis the possible development of loose morals was an ever-present matter of concern.

Thus we see the justification for the deep attention that our Sages of old gave to the problem of keeping our basic social structure - the family - intact, and for their efforts, through their laws and regulations, which we studied in NASHIM, to prevent the breaking up of this basic unit.

This article is excerpted from a talk presented by Dr. Krinsky at a Siyyum on April 8, 1984 at the completion of the study of the Mishnah order NASHIM by the Mishnah Fellowship of The Brooklyn Jewish Center, under the guidance of Rabbi Abraham P. Bloch.

Sunday, September 23

Selihot Services 7:30 am

Selihot (Penitential Prayers) signal us to prepare ourselves for the approaching High Holy Days Season. Upon the completion of the services, all in attendance are invited to partake of breakfast which is sponsored by our Men's Club.

Wednesday, September 26

Eve of Rosh Hashanah 5745

Candle Lighting 6:27 pm

Services 6:30 pm

Thursday, September 27

Rosh Hashanah

Services 7:30 am

Candle Lighting 7:29 pm

Evening Services 7:30 pm

Friday, September 28

Rosh Hashanah

Services 7:30 am

Candle Lighting 6:24 pm

Evening Services 6:30 pm

Saturday, September 29

Shabbat Shuvah

Services 8:30 am

Sidra: HAAZINU

Deuteronomy 32:1-52

Prophets: Hosea 14:2-10;

Micah 7:18-20; Joel 2:15-17

Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the Jewish New Year, is also the beginning of the Ten Days of Penitence, which end with Yom Kippur. Sincere prayer and meditation help us to experience the reality of the Almighty and to dedicate ourselves anew to the establishment of His Kingdom on earth — the reign of freedom, justice and peace.

Shabbat Shuvah derives its name from the Haftorah of that day which begins with the word Shuvah — "Return," that is Repent.

Sunday, September 30

Fast of Gedaliah

Services 8:30 am

The Fast of Gedaliah commemorates the climax of the disasters that befell the First Jewish Commonwealth in 586 B.C.E.

Friday, October 5

Kol Nidre

Candle Lighting prior to services

Services 6:15 pm

Saturday, October 6

Yom Kippur

Services 8:30 am

Yizkor (Memorial Services) 11:15 am

Neilah 5:20 pm

Shofar 7:15 pm

Yom Kippur Sermons: On Yom Kippur Eve, the sermon by Rabbi Bloch will be preached immediately after the chanting of Kol Nidre.

On Yom Kippur morning, the Sermon by Rabbi Bloch and the President's annual message, by Mr. Benjamin Moskowitz, will follow the Memorial Services.

The Day of Atonement is a day of fasting and prayer when we strive to awaken the latent spiritual power in our souls so that it may become an effective and directing force in our daily conduct.

Wednesday, October 10

Erev Sukkot

Candle Lighting 6:04 pm

Services 6:30 pm

Thursday, October 11

Sukkot - First Day

Services 8:30 am

Candle Lighting 7:06 pm

Evening Services 7:00 pm

Friday, October 12

Sukkot - Second Day

Services 8:30 am

Candle Lighting 6:01 pm

Evening (Shabbat) Services 6:00 pm

Saturday, October 13

Shabbat Hol Hamoed Sukkot

Services 8:30 am

Wednesday, October 17

Hosha'na Rabbah

Services 7:30 am

Candle Lighting 5:53 pm

Evening Festival Services 6:00 pm

Thursday, October 18

Shemini Atzeret

Services 8:30 am

Yizkor (Memorial Services) 10:15 am

Candle Lighting 6:55 pm

Evening Festival Services 7:00 pm

Friday, October 19

Simhat Torah

Services 8:30 am

Evening (Shabbat) Services 6:00 pm

Saturday, October 20

Services 8:30 am

Blessing of new month of Heshvan

Sidra: BERESHIT

Genesis 1:1-6:8

Prophets: Isaiah 42:5-43:10

Friday, October 26

Rosh Hodesh Heshvan (First Day)

Candle Lighting 5:40 pm

Saturday, October 27

Rosh Hodesh Heshvan (Second Day)

Sidra: Noah

Genesis 6:9-11:32; Numbers 28:9-15

Prophets: Isaiah 66

Sunday, October 28

Daylight Savings Time ended today
Remember to turn your timepieces back 1 hour
Services 8:30 am EST

Friday, November 2

Balfour Day

Candle Lighting 4:32 pm

Saturday, November 3

Sidra: LEKH LEKHA

Genesis 12:1-17:27

Prophets: Isaiah 40:27-41:16

Following Sabbath Services, the entire congregation is invited to take of Kiddush.

Rev. Friedman will officiate at all Sabbath and Selihot Services. He will be assisted by the Center Choir on Selihot.

NOVEMBER - A MONTH OF JEWISH AND SECULAR OBSERVANCES

November is replete with many days devoted to Jewish and secular events. The month starts with Balfour Day (November 2), the day when, in 1917, the first recognition was made by a modern nation of the Jewish claim to Palestine as a national homeland.

What started auspiciously came to fruition thirty years later when, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted to partition Palestine, and set up a Jewish State. This decision climaxed many years of Zionist efforts.

To keep the Jewish word in front of all, Jewish Book Month starts on November 18 and will continue until December 18.

Let us not overshadow the secular days of this month as they are most important. On Tuesday, November 6, our electorate will have the quadrennial opportunity to elect a President. This is a day not to be overlooked or passed over lightly. There are many questions that will be decided by the outcome.

This important date will be followed a few days later when we observe Veterans Day on Sunday, November 11 (in New York, the observance will take place the following day).

The legal holidays end with a great feast on Thursday, November 22, when we celebrate the traditional day known as Thanksgiving.

There is much we have to be thankful about when you remember the great events that took place in and are observed this month of November.

CALENDAR DIARIES

Calendar Diaries for 5745/1984-85 are available for the asking at the Main Desk. We are indebted to Riverside Memorial Chapel for its kindness in providing the diaries for our members. The distribution will be made as long as the supply lasts.

RESERVE

Sunday, October 28, 1984

11:00 am

for our

Annual Meeting

Annual Report by
Our President

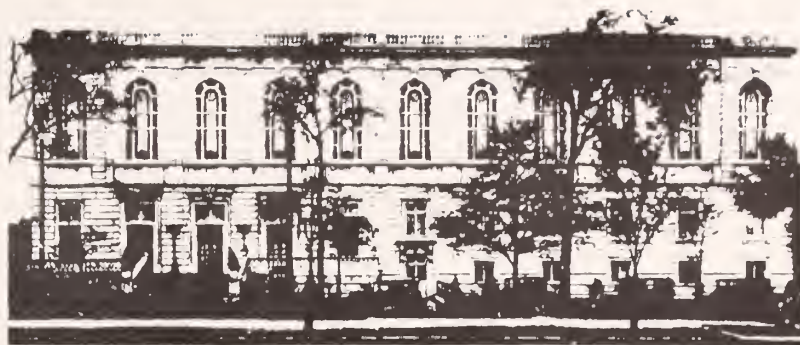
Mr. Benjamin Moskowitz

Refreshments and Entertainment
Social Hour

PLEASE NOTE:

Our Legacy Development Committee is ready to assist you or your legal representative to make provision for gifts in your will.

Information can be obtained from our office.



New Year Greetings From Officers And Staff

On the eve of the Jewish New Year 5745, the officers of the Brooklyn Jewish Center extend to all the members and friends of our institution their best wishes for a year of health, happiness and joy. May we, together with all mankind, be blessed with peace and prosperity.

In this hour, as the New Year is ushered in, we, the officers of this institution, take this opportunity of thanking all our members for their devotion and loyalty to our Center. We are confident that with the cooperation of our membership the year 5745 will be crowned with new achievements and success in our work.

On behalf of our community and our people,

L'Shonah Tovo Tikosevu!

Benjamin MoskowitzPresident
Emanuel CohenHon. President
Louis KramerVice-President
Isaac FrancoVice-President
Harry Leventhal ...Hon. Vice-President
Meyer AbramsTreasurer
Stanley C. BresnickSecretary

From The Center Staff

The Center Staff extends to the Rabbis, Officers, Trustees, Governors and members of the Brooklyn Jewish Center and their families, cordial greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

From The Sisterhood

The Officers of the Sisterhood extend heartiest New Year Greetings to all of our members and their families. Sisterhood

looks back with pride and satisfaction on its activities during the year 5744 and hopes for an even more successful season in 5745.

*With Best Wishes for a
Shono Tova Umesuka*

Belle Franco
Helen Heller
Bess MachlinPresidents
Anne Bresnick
Pauline Hurwitz
Sylvia KramerVice-Presidents
Gert FarbRecording Secretary
Bea Shapiro ..Alternate Recording Secy.
Ann BerisSocial Secretary
Molly Markowe ...Corresponding Secy.
Sylvia MoskowitzTreasurer

From The Men's Club

The Officers of the Men's Club wish all its members, families and friends a year of health and good tidings and a year that will bring true peace to our beloved land, to the State of Israel and to all mankind.

We invite each and every one of you to participate in this coming year's events.

May the Lord bless the entire Center, and may we and our families all be inscribed in the Book of Life and Happiness.

L'Shonah Tovo Tikosevu!

Archie LevinsonPresident
Louis Kramer
Dr. Milton Schiff
Stanley C. BresnickHon. Presidents
Isaac Franco
Charles MarksVice-Presidents
Max GreenseidFinancial Secretary

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Benjamin Moskowitz
and Family

92-30 56th Avenue
Elmhurst, New York

Greetings for the New Year

Mr. and Mrs.
Emanuel Cohen

10 Plaza Street

In Memory of

Aaron Gottlieb

Jack Gottlieb and Family

New Year Greetings

***Mr. and Mrs.
Jeffrey Aaron
and Family***

57-68 228th Street
Bayside, New York

In Loving Memory of

Sarah and Julius Kushner

Rabbi and Mrs. Harold Kushner
and Daughter

Rabbi and Mrs. Paul Kushner
and Children

In Memory of

Mrs. Rose G. Meislin

From Her Family

*To The Members Of
The Brooklyn Jewish Center*

New Year Greetings

***Mr. and Mrs.
Harry Leventhal***

***Mr. and Mrs.
Julius Leventhal***

Greetings from

William Goodstein

Mrs. Mervin Hurwitz

and Family

A Happy New Year

Mr. and Mrs.

Morris Z. Ottenstein

Amelia and Bill Smerling

לשנה טובה תכתבו

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Sterman

and Family

In Fond Remembrance

On The High Holy Days

Judge Joseph A. Solovei

Dr. Samuel Solovei

and Loving Parents

Jacob and Rachel Solovei

Loving Daughter of Anna B. Solovei

Brunice Blaustein

Sarah and Anna Solovei

215 East 68th Street

New York, New York 10021

A Happy New Year

Mrs. Meyer Abrams

120 East Hartsdale Avenue

Hartsdale, New York 10530

Dr. Irving and Sylvia Horowitz

and children

***Dr. Ernest and Maureen
Steven and Brenda***

and grandchildren

***Cliff and Etta
Sandy and Debbie***

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New Hyde Park, L.I., N.Y. 11041

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My Dear Departed Wife

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Fellow Members, Friends and Family*

Lou Kirsch

A Happy New Year

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and Family***

34 Plaza Street

Mr. Karl Lazar

388 Crown Street

In Memory of Parents

לשנה טובה תכתבו

Ethel and Henry B. Olshen

Dr. Milton Schiff

1303 Carroll Street

The Family of
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph B. Pincus

Louis and Sylvia B. Kramer

20 Plaza Street

A Happy New Year

Mrs. Moses Spatt and Family

Mr. and Mrs. Max Ballas

North Miami Beach, Florida

Mr. and Mrs. Gertrude Farb and Family

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A Healthy and Happy New Year*

Mr. Max Goldberg and Family

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Rego Park, New York

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Maurice and Anna Kozinn

Mollie Meyer

*Mrs. Louis Moskowitz
and Family*

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*Hon. and Mrs. Leon Deutsch
and Family*

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202 Canterbury Gate, Lynbrook, New York

Mrs. Lillie Jerrold
and Family

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Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Rosenthal
and Children
Charlotte and Allen

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Morris and Betty Berger
Miami Beach, Florida

Rabbi and Mrs. Abraham Bloch
and Family

A Happy New Year

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Mr. Harry Maslow

Mrs. Anne Bernhardt

Leon, Irving and Susan

granddaughter, Elie and grandson, Josh

135 Eastern Parkway

Mr. Jacob Hoffman

706 Eastern Parkway

Dr. and Mrs. Joseph L. Gottesman

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1900 Quentin Road

Benjamin Levy

***Mrs. Julia Spevack
and Family***

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Mr. and Mrs. Archie Levinson

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gutchman

Deerfield Beach, Florida

Nathan and Bessie Wolfe

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Murray and Terry Goldsmith

Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Solomon

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Max and Sallie Wolfe

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Lippin

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Helen and Lester Lyons

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and
Mr. and Mrs. Elias Leo Gold

Rabbi and Mrs.
Mordecai H. Lewittes
and Children

Irvin and Laura Rubin
Julie, Audrey and Jesse

לשנה טובה תכתבו

Mrs. Ann Beris
In Memory of Husband
Dr. Isidore Beris

Florence and Charles
Rubenstein

Mr. and Mrs. William Sterling

Samuel Shapiro

Martin Katz

Mr. and Mrs. Max Greenseid

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Brooklyn Jewish Center*

Mr. and Mrs. Burton Goldberg

3838 Flatlands Avenue

Mr. and Mrs. David Finkelstein

*Rev. and Mrs. Abraham Friedman
and Family*

Buddy and Helene Lowenfeld

A Happy New Year

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140 8th Avenue

Harold and Pauline Brown

Mr. and Mrs. Max Taft

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Edelson

*Mr. and Mrs.
Stanley Bresnick*

Samuel "Budd"
and Ruth Schein

Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin Zohn
9 Prospect Park West

In Loving Memory of
Walter Warren Bronster

Stephen, Barbara and Michelle Bronster
David Bronster
Jeffrey Bronster
Natalie Bronster
41 Eastern Parkway

לשנה טובה תכתבו

Mr. Stanley Levin
75 Henry Street

Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Waldman
Floral Park, New York

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Hurwitz

Mr. Louis Solovay

1716 44th Street

Mrs. Morton Klinghoffer
children and grandchildren

3215 Avenue H

The Seidenfeld Family

Mr. and Mrs.

Harold R. Shapiro

Children and Grandchildren

A Happy New Year

Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Meltzer

Nettie H. Melker
and Family

In Memory of Loved Ones

Mrs. Harry Goldstein
and Family

Mr. and Mrs.

Harry Ellenport

and Family

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